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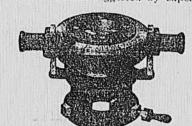
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rties in this and adjoining States, nd also another case pending in arroll county of almost equal magni-ide, which will shortly be tested, 1 ear, however, that the law is against are people in both of these cases and this merciless, unnecessary and

How Test Case Was Made. Mr. Brown is a conservative man, nd not given to strong language, except when fired by enthusiasm or earnestness, or chafing under an aparent imposition. On being informed that he was suspected of having in-spired the Rountree-Saville sult, he replied that doubtless this conclusion was reached from the fact that Mr. Rountree purchased the property that as conveyed by the deed in question. rom his firm, and his (Rountree's) atention had been called to the matter by him, but that Mr. Rountree had acted entirely of his own volition in matter; and that both he and Clerk Saville, in testing the matter, had ren-dered the public a service far-reaching

Saville, in testing the matter, had rendered the public a service far-reaching in its results, and great in importance, not only to every court clerk in the Commonwealth, but to every man and woman who purchases property for every infant to whom a legacy has been left by deed of gift; and they deserved all credit for pushing the case to a speedy finality.

Virginia's Greedy System.

Mr. Brown was asked if he had made any investigation on the subject of this tax on deeds, and if so, would he object to giving results.

"Not at all," he replied, "and," said he; "The Times-Dispatch can do no greater service to a long suffering public than to lend its aid to rectifying a wrong that has so grievously existed in this iniquitous ad valorem tax on deeds." Thousands of dollars, he said, are exacted annually by the State from unsuspecting persons who record deeds for which they absolutely receive no adequate return. "I am not referring," he said, "to the fee of a couple of dollars paid the clerk for transmitting the deed to record; this is a srvice for which they should be paid; but I am referring particularly to the ad valorem tax on the value of the property, which is charged in addition to the clerk's fee, and also the commissioner's fee for transferring the property from one name to another.

"This unjust tax." he continued, "is not exacted by any other State from which I have as yet heard; and the State is not only bleeding its own whildren, but this unnecessary extortion is a deterrent to many people to buying and settling here, who will suffer under this tax matter, and in some cases is exaggerated, to our detriment.

"As instance of this, last fall a promisent and prosperous Western man

As instance of this, last fall a prom-"As instance of this, last fall a prominent and prosperous Western man with whom we had been corresponding for twelve months or more, to induce him to locate here, finally visited Richmond and purchased a \$10,000 farm for a relative. He was so well pieused with the property that before passing the deed, began negotiation for a \$60,000 property for himself; before concluding, which he obtained the deed for the first purchase and went to the courthouse to record it. The clerk charged him the ad advalorem tax, amounting to \$10; clerk's fee, \$1.50; commissioner's fee, \$1.10; making a total of \$13,60.

"White he was utterly astounded.

correct, he replied, that he never heard of such a thing in all his life, and the same deed in his native State (Michigan), would cost about \$2. He at once got 'cold feet' on the \$60,000 deal and left for a hotter climate (Florida)

Fees Charged in Other States.

"The instance so impressed itself



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\$1,800,000.00

ten and take pleasure in showing you the answers received.

"First of which is from Michigan, and reads as follows: The law for recording instruments is 11 cents for every 100 words. Value or consideration has nothing to do with the same that tax certificates, amount to \$1.06, and quit claim deeds to 75 cents as a rule.' This confirms the statement of our Western correspondent, as you will note the same deed in the State of \$22,773.011. These figures relate to new

quiry from the staid old State of for in Virginia.

would make this deed cost about 40 cents in the good old State of Alabama.

"Skipping again to the West, I wrote to the Buckeye State, and find that in Ohio there is no ad valorem, and the cost for recording, 12 cents per 100 words and 19 cents per name for indexing. From this you will see the same deed would cost probably 36 cents in this thrifty State of Chio.

"I will further state that these inquiries were not from any picked States, but taken haphazard just as they occurred to me, and the replies would doubtless be about the same from any State in the Union.

Mr. Brown Warms Up.

"Contrast these charges, if you please, with this vampire law of Virginia, which exacts a tax amounting to five times as much as any other State would require, and you will readily see how grossly our people have been imposed upon.

"That is not all," added Mr. Brown, as he warmed up to his subject:

"If the property is resold a dozen times in one year, it is subject to the same tax each time, and so far as I can learn this is the only State that requires you to divulge private affairs in requiring you to disclose to the public what you pay or get for any property you may sell. This is an unjust exactment, and to my mind an unconstitutional requirement, and was a thorn in the flesh of that good man and great philanthropist, Major Ginter, who almost invariably used a nominal consideration in his deeds of purchase and sale; and many others also do the same thing, hoping thereby to save taxes and to prevent disclosure of their private affairs.

"But when the deed is recorded, in order for the State to exact its pound of flesh the clerk requires you to disclose to disclose to the proper to the state to exact its pound to filesh the clerk requires you to disclose to disclose to the public what you pay or get for any property you may sell. This is an unjust exact the flesh of that good man and great philanthropist, Major Ginter, who

affairs.

"But when the deed is recorded, in order for the State to exact its pound of flesh, the clerk requires you to disclose the true value or else you will have to lie about it; and hence any one so disposed can go to the courthouse and examine your deed and find out your private business, be it sale or purchase simply from the charge of the chase, simply from the charge of the tax upon the deed. This is all wrong and should not be; the State has as much right to know what you pay for your clothes or your groceries or your dector's bill

A Relic of Reconstruction.
"I cannot imagine any better use of your real estate column than to inform the people about this iniquitous tax, how they have been bled for the past forty-five years, for as I understand it, this law was made soon after the war, when the State was impover-ished and there was some need and necessity for it, which is not the case now, nor has been for the past decade or more."

MASSACHUSETTS MUTUAL.

Old Reliable Company That Does Big Business and Makes Big Invest-ments in Virginia. The Massachusetts Mutual Life In-surance Company, of Springfield, Mass.,

intents and purposes a Virginia con-"First of which is from Michigan, cern, has just filed its sixtleth annual

Michigan would cost \$1,06."

Thinking possibly this law was only confined to the West, I then made in for, \$1,049,000 were delivered and paid

Connecticut, and find that the sole fee in that State, 10 cents for each 280 words of the recordation of deeds being not a governed by value whatever, and this same deed, which cost nearly \$14 in Virginia, would cost only 40 cents in the good old Nutmeg State."

"Pushing my inquiries further and coming nearer home."

"Pushing my inquiries further and coming nearer home." The instance so impressed lites of the first instance so impressed lites of the first instance so impressed lites of the first in the propersity of the instance so impressed lites of the first in the progressive, up-to-date to the first of the first of

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Pres.; Andrew M. Glover, Cashier.

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